

6 Things You Need to Know About Using Lubricants for Better Sex

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To create more heat between the sheets, try using a lubricant.

Curious about using a lubricant but not sure if it's right for you? According to a [study published in 2011 in the *Journal of Sexual Medicine*](#), women who use lubricants during sexual activity experience more pleasure and satisfaction than those who don't. Water-based lubricants were associated with fewer uncomfortable genital symptoms.

"Lubricants can enhance sexual pleasure by decreasing friction and irritation," says [Matthew Wosnitzer, MD](#), a board-certified urologic surgeon at the Center for Male Health and Reproduction in Fairfield, Connecticut.

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Ready to try one? Here are six things to consider before getting busy with a lubricant.

1. Using Lube for Sex Can Keep Pain at Bay

If sex is often painful or uncomfortable for you, using a lube can help make things more enjoyable. Some lubricants contain [lidocaine](#) and benzocaine — anesthetics that help decrease pain, says [Rachel Needle, PsyD](#), a licensed clinical psychologist and certified sex therapist in West Palm Beach, Florida.

But because these ingredients can numb the skin and lower pain perception, it's important to use only the recommended amount and stop using it if sex still hurts. "Pain could be an indication of tearing, and that can lead to an increased risk of STIs," says Dr. Needle.

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2. Lubes That Contain Sugar Can Be Irritating

"Some ingredients in lubricants can be harmful to women," says [Hilda Hutcherson, MD](#), a professor of obstetrics and gynecology at Columbia University Medical Center and a senior associate dean in the office of diversity and multicultural affairs at Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York City. "For example, glycerin, which is a sugar derivative, can cause increased yeast infections in women who are susceptible to them." Flavored lubricants, which may contain other types of sugars, can also be irritating for some women.

To play it safe, Dr. Hutcherson recommends the following glycerin-free formulas: [Astroglide Sensitive Skin Gel](#), [K-Y Ultrage](#)l, and [Lelo Personal Moisturizer](#).

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3. Some Lubes Can Help You Conceive

While certain lubes can be harmful to sperm, others — like [Pre-Seed](#) personal lubricant — are formulated to support sperm on their journey to fertilize an egg. "Pre-Seed is one of the few lubricants with clinical studies to support its safe use in couples trying to conceive," says Dr. Wosnitzer. "It mimics the cervical mucus pH (acidity level) and consistency, and it has antioxidants that may be helpful to sperm."

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4. Lubes Should Be Tested Before Use During Sex

"There are some lubricants with menthol-like components that are warming or tingling, and these can be extremely irritating for some women," says Hutcherson. That's why it's a good idea to give it a test run before using it during sex. "Place a tiny bit on one side of your labia, and if you find that it irritates, burns, or is uncomfortable in any way, then don't use any more of it," advises Hutcherson. "Never use a lube for the first time during intercourse; always test it first." She recommends buying a variety pack of lubricants with different ingredients and textures to determine which one works best for you and your partner.

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5. Your Sex Lube Doesn't Have to Be Store-Bought

"You can certainly use coconut oil and other household oils during sex," says Hutcherson. "Just remember that they can't be used with condoms because they break down the latex." If you do decide to use a household oil as a lubricant, be sure to use a non-latex condom, she adds. Coconut oil and vegetable oil are both safe options.

Not interested in bringing household oils into the bedroom? Create more natural lubrication by drinking extra water. "If you're dehydrated, you're going to have difficulty making lubrication," says Hutcherson.

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6. Using Lube for Sex Is Totally Normal

If you're worried about incorporating lube into your sex routine, don't be. "Everyone needs lube at some point," says Hutcherson. She recommends incorporating it into foreplay. "Don't be afraid of it," she says. "Just have fun with it."

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